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ABSTRACT

A non-profit program based in Washington State that promotes access to college for low income groups/welfare recipients is described, along with results of research on the program. The H.O.M.E (Helping Ourselves Means Education) program is designed to help welfare recipients leave the welfare system by entering educational institutions. Additional objectives are to: provide information on educational opportunities and aid available to this population; expose these individuals to the academic and life style skills needed to successfully pursue a college education; build self-esteem among participants through assistance in developing communication and other skills; educate colleges and social service agencies about the unmet needs of this population; and educate the general public about the needs and accomplishments of HOME participants. Information is provided on the project's method of information dissemination and its staff/advisory boards. Results of questionnaires completed at HOME workshops in 1985 and 1986 are summarized. It was found that 80.5% of HOME participants were high school graduates, and 32.5% have attended college. The study questionnaires and statistical results are appended. (SW)

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H.O.M.E.:

"HELPING OURSELVES MEANS EDUCATION"

Judy Blum-Anderson
Washington State University
May 26, 1986

A Report Prepared for Presentation to the Secretary of Education, Members of The United States Congress, and Interested Agencies and Individuals.

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HOME

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PART I

AN INTRODUCTION TO HOME

DEFINITION/PURPOSE

H.O.M.E. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the dissemination of information about resources available for higher education to low-income/welfare individuals who, because of lack of information, are denied access to continuing education. Utilizing a "grassroots" approach, HOME is also designed to bring participants in touch with others in the same situation to provide the encouragement and support needed to make the transistion from public assistance to college. In addition to direct contact with the individual participants themselves, HOME transmits information to public service agencies concerning the educational desires and needs of their clients. The fundamental philosophy of HOME is that education is an effective, lasting, positive method of providing low-income/welfare recipients with a pathway to re-enter society as self-supporting and productive people.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the HOME program are:

* to encourage welfare recipients to leave the welfare system by entering educational institutions.

* to provide information on educational opportunities and assistance available to low income/welfare individuals.

* to expose low-income/welfare individuals to the academic and lifestyling skills needed to successfully pursue a college education.

* to build self-esteem among participants through assistance in communication skills, interviewing, public speaking, organizational and planning skills.

* to educate existing educational institutions and social service agencies to the needs of low-income/welfare individuals that are not being met through existing agencies and programs.

* to provide educational forums (public appearances, letters, news releases and other public information) to members of the general public to educate them to the needs and accomplishments of HOME participants.

METHOD OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

HOME spreads its information via a series of participant workshops, participant support groups, public service agency administrator workshops, and public information services. In addition, HOME publishes a bi-monthly newsletter which provides participants with information about sources of financial aid, deadlines for completion of admission forms for colleges and financial aid, and schedules for workshops held around the state. The newsletter also attempts to provide role modeling by including short, auto-biographical sketches of participants currently attending school. At this point in time, the mailing list for the HOME newsletter numbers 6,000. It is distributed throughout the state of Washington as well as to individuals in other states who have written for information about HOME as a result of national television publicity.

In an attempt to change the public's misconceptions about low-income/welfare individuals, brochures, letters, public service announcements and media presentations (radio, magazine, newspaper, television) have been produced. The brochures and letters are distributed to job service and various social service agency offices, community centers, financial aid offices, and other public meeting places.

Letters have been sent out within Washington State to the governor, state senators, selected mayors, and selected administrators within the social service system. On the national level, letters were mailed to all senators and selected representatives. These letters generated a number of meetings with various legislators, the governor, and key state level social service administrators. The result of this communication with the public netted HOME's first financial support - a $40,000 emergency funding grant from the State of Washington Employment Securities Division. The funding was granted to finance an estimated 300-600 participants. However, because of the enormous state and national interest from the people HOME serves, the initial grant was forced to fund ten times that amount - 6,000.

STAFF/ADVISORY BOARDS

At this point in time, HOME is entirely operated by its founder, the founder's spouse, one part-time administrative assistant, and one volunteer coordinator of the support groups. When funding was available, paid staff included the founder and administrative assistant, one part-time work-study employee, and various other work-study employees who worked on short-term projects. The primary responsibility of the staff was to handle the correspondence and phone calls from participants and interested future participants state and nationwide. Because the number of program participants has grown from the estimated 300-600 to 6,000, the initial $40,000 grant was depleted in less than a year and presently, due to lack of funds, only the founder and the part-time administrative assistant remain paid. However, this salary exists in name

only since the two paid staff members return their salaries (plus additional personal funds) to the HOME program.

HOME currently is directed by an Advisory Board and a Board of Trustees both composed of four members.

RESEARCH

Due to the lack of staff and resources, limited research has been completed on the HOME participants. HOME believed its majority of time and energy were best spent on building the concept of HOME, and disseminating information to and corresponding and communicating with its participants. Much information was needed to be given to the participants to develop the concept of HOME; only now is HOME beginning to gather the information it needs in order to justify its existance. As of the end of May 1986, an organized, systematic data collection process has been initiated. A survey (Appendix A) which has been field-tested is being distributed by way of the June/July issue of the HOME newsletter, regularly scheduled support group sessions meeting during summer, and at the fall workshop sessions. It is intended that preliminary results of this research be available after September 1986.

PART II

MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Fall 1985 and March 1986

THE METHOD

A questionnaire was written in February 1986 to gather information about the people attending HOME workshops. The questionnaires were distributed in March 1986 and completed at the workshops held in Seattle, Kelso/Longview, Port Angeles, Everett, Olympia, Centralia, Yesler, and Tacoma. Questionnaires were distributed at each workshop and completed at the end of the workshop. Not all the individuals who attended the workshops received one. The questionnaire generated a total of ninety responses. Data were analyzed using SPSSx on CMS at Washington State University. (Appendix A)

A questionnaire was administered in the Fall of 1985 at the end of two separate HOME workshops in different locations in the state. There were a total of forty responses. (Appendix A)

A current survey (Appendix A) has been prepared, field-tested, and has been distributed through the bi-monthly HOME newsletter. It is also being distributed by way of regularly scheduled support groups and the fall session of scheduled workshops. Follow-up personal interviews will be held with those participants currently attending school because of direct or indirect contact with HOME. This will serve to further quantify the need for HOME's existance. Participation in the interviews will be voluntary. Preliminary results from this survey will be available after September 1986.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

* 80% of HOME participants are of the age group 18-35.

* 87.8% of HOME participants have children. Mean number of children is 2.0. Mean age of children is 9.2 years.

* 88.8% of HOME participants have worked outside their homes.

* 72.2% of HOME participants are on public assistance.

* 45.5% of HOME participants have been on public assistance for less than a year.

* Only 8% of HOME participants have parents who are/were on public assistance.

* The largest percentage of HOME participants heard about the program through the local newspaper and the Department of Social and Health Services.

* 43% of HOME participants at a given workshop have attended a previous workshop.

* 100% of HOME participants rated the workshops as helpful.

* 80.5% of HOME participants have graduated from high school.

* 32.5% of HOME participants have attended some college.

In order to personalize the results of HOME's research, the following is a selection of individual answers generated by the question "What attracted you to this program?"

"It provides a way for us to gain working skills and get off welfare and provide for our families."
"The need to be self-supporting."
"Not wanting to be on welfare. I want to be able to support my daughter and myself well."
"Education is a way of getting off DSHS."
"I need an education." (Currently has an 11th grade education.)

The following is a list of individual answers to the question "How do you feel about your situation right now?"

"I want to improve my life."
"Frustrated."
"Scared and unsure."
"Stagnated."
"Hopeful that the financial aid to attend school is available."
"Looking forward to education as a way off welfare. Hope for it soon."

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary research carried out by HOME can do much to help dispel the notion that individuals receiving welfare are uneducated people who want nothing more out of life than to remain on welfare. The fact that 80.5% of the HOME participants have graduated from high school speaks greatly about the ability of these people. The percentage of HOME participants graduating from high school is <u>above</u> the national average (75%) quoted by John Goodlad during a lecture at Washington State University in February 1986. In addition, the fact that 92% of the participants have parents who <u>were not</u> on welfare helps dispute the statement that welfare is an unbreakable cycle.

The number of people attending workshops around the state, the number of letters received from around the nation, and the number of subscribers to the newsletter all point to the fact that low-income/welfare people place a value on education. Oftentimes it is not until something has been given up that value is placed upon its worth. Low-income/welfare individuals are people who have terminated their educations and have experienced the result

- low paying jobs, welfare checks, and low self-esteem. For the minimally educated, HOME provides information about the education they will need in order to begin a second chance on life; and through self-help support groups, HOME enables its participants to receive the encouragement needed to enroll, and remain, in school.

PART III

RESEARCH RESULTS

ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE AT HOME WORKSHOPS 1986

Area	Number
Spokane - 4 meetings	400
Everett - 2 meetings	44
Bellingham	32
Centralia/Chehalis	141
Tri Cities	56
Olympia - 2 meetings	61
Tacoma	72
Yakima - 2 meetings	63
Wenatchee	46
Walla Walla	40
Vancouver - 2 meetings	182
Redmond	15
Seattle	79
Port Angeles	73
Colville	30

This list and count is by no means complete. It is merely an estimation gleaned from sign-in sheets available at each workshop. Many people do not sign the sheets and many sheets are not accounted for.

LETTERS TO HOME

HOME's mailbox is filled with letters from people in nearly every city in the state of Washington as well as from many cities nationwide. A rough count of letters filed in notebooks yielded a total of 724. This count does not include the large box full of unfiled letters nor the letters that are in the possession of the Administrative Assistant.

RESULTS OF THE H.O.M.E. SURVEY:
STATEWIDE WORKSHOPS
March 1986

The results of the survey are calculated by percentages. The surveys were issued at the end of H.O.M.E. workshops given throughout the state of Washington. A sample of the survey instrument appears in Appendix A .

H.O.M.E. INFORMATION

Sources of Information About H.O.M.E.:

SOURCE	PERCENT
Newspaper	29.2
D.S.H.S.	21.3
Friend	18.0
Other	9.0
WIN	9.0
H.O.M.E. Flyer	6.7
T.V.	5.6
School	1.1

Previous Attendance at a H.O.M.E. Workshop:

ATTENDANCE	FREQ.	PERCENT
YES	38	43.5
NO	50	55.6

Were H.O.M.E. Workshops Considered Helpful:

HELPFUL	FREQ.	PERCENT
YES	38	100
NO	00	00

WELFARE INFORMATION

Participants Currently Receiving Welfare: 72.2%

Welfare Recipients Who Have Tried At Some Time to Get Off Welfare: 54.7%

Participants Who Have Parents on Welfare:

ON WELFARE	FREQ.	PERCENT
YES	7	8.0
NO	80	92.0

Participants Currently/Recently in an Abusive Relationship:

RELATIONSHIP	FREQ.	PERCENT
YES	37	44.6
NO	46	55.4

Participants With a History of Abuse:

ABUSE	FREQ.	PERCENT
YES	39	45.9
NO	46	51.1

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Participants Who Have Children: 87.8%

NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT
One	30.0
Two	32.5
Three	18.8
Four	11.2
Five	3.7
Six	2.5
Seven	1.2

Ages of Children: Mean Age 9.2 years.

AGES	FREQ.	PERCENT
Under Five	43	26.0
Five to Nine	51	31.3
Ten to Fourteen	38	23.3
Fifteen to Nineteen	18	11.0
Twenty to Twenty-Four	12	7.4

H.O.M.E. Partic. Who Have Worked Outside the Home: 88.8%

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

H.O.M.E. Participants Currently Attending School: 16.2%

Education Level of H.O.M.E. Participants:

GRADE LEVEL	FREQ.	PERCENT
Ninth	4	4.5
Tenth	6	6.7
Eleventh	6	6.7
Twelfth	43	48.3
One Year College	12	13.5
Two Years College	12	13.5
Three Years College	1	1.1
Four Years College	3	3.4
Five Years College	1	1.0

Schools Participants Desire to Attend:

SCHOOL	PERCENT
Uncertain	34.9
Four Year	33.7
Two Year	22.1
Vocational	7.0
One Year	1.2
Other	1.2

Participants Attending the March 1986 Workshops Who Have Attended Previous Workshops and Are In School*:

	ATTENDED WORKSHOPS	
IN SCHOOL	% Yes	% No
Yes	9.3	6.9
No	33.7	50.0

*The actual percentage of participants attending school because of direct or indirect contact with HOME will be determined by the research in progress.

RESEARCH RESULTS:
Fall 1985 Workshops
Admissions Information: WSU HOME Participants

The following statistics are located in: Bolliger-Sasaki, Carol, Higher Education for Public Assistance Recipients: An Analysis of the Public Service Organization HOME (Helping Ourselves Means Education), Master's Thesis, Washington State University, December 1985.

Applications for Admission to WSU: Fall 1984

During the 1984-85 school year, HOME generated a minimum of 94 applicants to Washington State University. None of these applicants had previously applied for admission at this university. All of the applicants were residents of the state of Washington.

Ethnicity	Freq.
White	68
Asian	17
Black	7
American Indian	1
Portuguese	1

Academic Backgrounds	Freq.
With High School Diploma	75
Without High School Diploma	5
With GED	15
Past College Attendance	67

1

Questionnaire Responses

Near the end of Bolliger-Sasaki's study, survey forms (Appendix A) were distributed to two workshop audiences. Questionnaires were completed at the workshops, and a total of forty were returned. The sample was entirely female. The following is a breakdown of the survey responses.

Age	Percent
Less than 18	5%
18-25	30%
26-35	50%
Over 30	15%

Marital Status	Percent
Single	30%
Separated	30%
Divorced	40%

No. of Children	Percent
0	15%
1	40%
2	30%
3	10%
4-5	5%

Various Questions	Yes	No
Live With Parents	20%	80%
Receive Alimony/Child Support	27%	73%
Other Financial Support	42%	58%
Self-Supporting	32%	68%

At this point in time, the HOME participants most commmonly heard about the program from DSHS. [2]

[1] Bolliger-Sasaki, p. 71.

[2] Bolliger-Sasaki, p. 68.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:
STATEWIDE WORKSHOPS
MARCH 1986

1. How did you hear about SAVE/HOME? __radio __T.V. __newspaper __school __WIN __DSHS __flyer__ other

2. Do you want to go to a __1 year __2 year __4 year __vocational/job training __uncertain __other

3. Are you currently on welfare or public assistance? ___

4. Do you have any children? How many?____ Ages:_____

5. Have you tried to get off welfare before? _____
If yes, what happened? _____

6. Have you worked outside the home?_____ If yes, what type of job did you have?_____

7. Are you in school now? _____

8. What is the highest year in school you have commpleted?
5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

9. Have you received information about school options from other sources? _____ What sources?_____

10. Were/Are your parents on welfare? _____

11. Do you have a history of neglect or abuse (sexual, psychological or physical)?_____

12. Have you been to a SAVE/HOME workshop before? _____
If yes, was it helpful?_____

13. What attracted you to this program?_____

14. How do you feel about your situation right now?_____

SURVEY OF H.O.M.E. PARTICIPANTS
June-September 1986

DIRECTIONS: Please circle the correct letter or fill in the blanks for the following items:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Age:_____ Sex: a. female
b. male

Ethnic Background:
a. White (not hispanic origin)
b. Black (not hispanic origin)
c. Hispanic
d. Asian/Pacific Islander
e. American Indian/Alaskan Native
f. Other

Marital Status:
a. single, never married
b. married
c. separated, not divorced
d. divorced
e. widowed

Do you have children living at home?
a. yes Ages:_____
b. no

Are you currently on some form of public assistance?
a. yes What form?_____
b. no

What is the total amount of time (months and years) you have received some form of public assistance?_____

Have you ever tried to go off public assistance?
a. yes
b. no
c. never been on public assistance

Were/Are your parents currently on some form of public assistance?
a. yes
b. no

Have you ever been physically, psychologically, or sexually abused?
a. yes
b. no

Are you now involved in, or have you ever been involved in an abusive relationship?
a. yes
b. no

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION:

How did you first hear about HOME?
a. radio
b. television
c. newspaper
d. friend
e. school
f. WIN
g. DSHS
h. JTPA
i. flyer
g. other (explain_____
_____

How many H.O.M.E. workshops have you attended? _____

Have you received information about school options from other sources? a. yes Where?_____
b. no

If you have received information about school options from other sources, what type(s) of information did you receive? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Financial Aid Sources
b. Admissions Information - 2 Yr. Inst.
c. Admissions Information - 4 Yr. Inst.
d. Business/Vocational School Information
e. Other (explain_____)

Circle your current level of education.

a. 8th Grade
b. 9th Grade
c.10th Grade
d.11th Grade
e.12th Grade
f.GED
g. 1 Year College
h. 2 Years College
i. 3 Years College
j. 4 Yrs. Col. Degree____)
k. graduate work

What was the <u>main</u> reason you ended your education? (Circle one answer.)

a. no money
b. no desire to continue school at the time
c. got married
d. got pregnant
e. was not doing well in school
f. health reasons
g. expelled
h. found a job
i. currently attending school (explain_____)
j. other (explain_____)

What type of education do you intend to seek? (Circle all that apply.)

a. undecided
b. 2 year institution
c. 4 year institution
d. business/vocational
e. GED/High School
f. other (explain _____)

How has H.O.M.E. helped you in your decisions about continuing your education?

a. no help at all
b. got me thinking about returning to school
c. I am currently attending school because of H.O.M.E.
d. I am enrolled in school for coming year, semester or quarter because of H.O.M.E.
e. Other (explain_____)

Where did you receive this survey? _____

If you are a HOME participant who is <u>in school now because of HOME</u> and are willing to be interviewed please write your name, address and phone number on the following lines. HOME needs to establish the importance of its existance in order to qualify for funding. Without funding, HOME can't continue.

Name _____
Address_____
_____

APPENDIX B

EXCERPT FROM A PARTICIPANT LETTER

Carol Sasaki
P.O. Box 621
Pullman, Wa. 99163

April 4, 1986

Dear Carol,

Hi. This is a long overdue letter. When I received my HOME newsletter with all the important information, I decided to sit down and write. (After I put my two year old out to play).

I want you to know how much you have helped me come out of my depressing state of being. The lecture you gave on Valentine's Day in Pasco meant so much to me. I felt myself getting excited about my life again. I've been on welfare for almost a year and since that lecture day my attitude has been on the road to recovery.

My life story could parallel yours in many ways. I knew then after your life synopsis that I could start caring about something again.

Carol, thank you so much for helping me get my life going again. I plan on attending all the SAVE/HOME happenings and will help out where I am able.

Gratefully yours,

P.S. I sent in my FAF and have really been gearing myself for college. It's scarey, but I love it.

PARTICIPANT LETTER

February 4, 1986

Dear HOME,

I am presently receiving DSHS funds. I have a 6 year old son and I am attending Whatcom Community College full-time. In June 1985 I graduated from WCC with an Office Administration degree. I am now completing my GUR classes in preparation for attending Western Washington University this fall. (I hope!)

I am pleased that someone cares enough to encourage and support low income people who are actively struggling to improve their financial circumstances.

Your flyer caught my attention because I've realized that I need to improve my level of self-esteem if I'm to put my education to use. I also need to acquire some living skills and parenting skills.

I will be out of town on Feb. 13 when the workshop is scheduled in Bellingham. However, I would like to receive any materials related to the content of this workshop, in addition to your newsletter and anything else helpful. Thank you.

Sincerely,